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COVID Vaccine Mandates From Biden Admin May Cripple National Guard + More

The Defender's Top Brother NewsWatch brings you the latest headlines related to governments' abuse of power, including attacks on democracy, civil liberties and use of mass surveillance.

By The Defender Staff

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COVID Vaccine Mandates From Biden Admin May Cripple National Guard

Fox News reported:

For decades, the National Guard has served as the backbone of saving Americans across the country in times of crisis. Whether it's helping coordinate hurricane responses, training at-risk youth, responding to domestic civil unrest, fighting wildfires or establishing COVID-19 field hospitals and treating patients — they've been there for us.

When the next crisis comes to our shores, the U.S. will lack the number of Guardsmen and women to come to our rescue.

June 30 marked Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin's deadline for members of the National Guard and Reserves to receive the COVID-19 vaccine despite Congress' mandate that the Department of Defense establish uniform procedures under which service members can be exempted.

Should Secretary Austin enforce this mandate on service members who have opted not to get vaccinated due to personal health reasons or religious exemptions, the National Guard will be crippled.

To date, approximately 60,000 National Guard and Reserves remain unvaccinated and the pending decision from the Biden administration could punish the very service members who have been on the front lines of fighting this pandemic.

NYC Employees Fired for Not Getting COVID Vaccine Grows to More Than 1,750

New York Post reported:

More than 1,750 city workers have been fired for refusing to get a COVID-19 vaccination — or 200-plus more than previously revealed, the Mayor's office confirmed Saturday.

In February, Adams fired 1,430 city employees, including 914 in the Department of Education and 36 in the NYPD, for refusing to get vaccinated. In March, the city fired another 101 workers, including 42 in the DOE, but none in the NYPD. There have been no updates since.

Last month, Adams offered most workers fired for going without a jab a brief period to get their jobs back — provided they got the first dose of a vaccine by June 30 and made arrangements for a second dose by Aug. 15.

More than 6,000 city workers who applied for medical or religious accommodations or exemptions from the vaccination requirement have yet to get a decision.

Cardinals' Nolan Arenado, Paul Goldschmidt Explain Why They Didn't Get COVID Vaccine

Sports Illustrated reported:

On Sunday it was revealed that Cardinals third baseman Nolan Arenado and first baseman Paul Goldschmidt will not be allowed to travel to Canada to play the Blue Jays because they're not vaccinated against COVID-19. Both All-Stars explained why they haven't gotten vaccinated against the virus.

"It's just a personal choice, and I'm not trying to do a political stand here or be a spokesperson for this or that," Arenado said, per MLB.com. "I'm just choosing to do what's best for me and my family, and I mean no harm. But it's unfortunate that I've got to miss two games."

In order to enter Canada, a person must be fully vaccinated against the virus two weeks before traveling there or quarantine upon arrival. By missing the two-game series, Goldschmidt and Arenado will forfeit $285,714 and $186,615, respectively, according to John Denton.

"It was not an easy decision, but over this year-plus that this has happened, I've tried to talk to as many doctors and professionals as I could, figured out as much as I could, and I decided the potential risks outweighed the potential benefits of doing it," Goldschmidt said.

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Pastor Jailed for Holding Church Service During Canada's Lockdown Wins Legal Victory

The Daily Wire reported:

A Canadian court has awarded a major legal win to Artur Pawlowski, the pastor who was arrested and jailed for holding a church service during Alberta's lockdown.

Pawlowski, the minister of Calgary Street Church, was arrested by Calgary police in dramatic fashion in the middle of a busy highway on May 8 last year as he was driving home from church, where his congregation had gathered without masks in violation of public health orders.

On Friday, an Alberta appeals court panel ruled that the Alberta health agency's order restraining "illegal public gatherings" was "not sufficiently clear and unambiguous" as to apply to the Pawlowski's.

"The Pawlowskis' appeals are allowed. The finding of contempt and the sanction order is set aside. The fines that have been paid by them are to be reimbursed," the three-member panel wrote in their 16-page ruling. The court ordered Alberta Health Services, the province's health agency, to reimburse Pawlowski for his legal costs, as well as the fines, levied against him.

Mask Wearing Required in Kentucky's Largest School District

Associated Press reported:

Kentucky's largest school district will require universal masking on school property as Jefferson County moves into the highest level of COVID-19 community spread.

The change begins Monday and lasts until Jefferson County comes out of the red, media outlets reported. It comes a little more than two weeks before classes resume in Jefferson County Public Schools.

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear a mask in district property or on school buses.

Uber Admits Covering up Massive 2016 Data Breach in Settlement With U.S. Prosecutors

The Verge reported:

> Uber admitted to covering up a massive cybersecurity attack that took place in October 2016, exposing the confidential data of 57 million customers and drivers, as part of a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice to avoid criminal prosecution.
>
> In order to not be prosecuted for the cover-up, Uber "admits that its personnel failed to report the November 2016 data breach to the [Federal Trade Commission] despite a pending FTC investigation into data security at the company," according to a press release from the DOJ.

Hackers used stolen credentials to access a private source code repository and obtain a proprietary access key, which they then used to access and copy large quantities of data associated with Uber's users and drivers, including data pertaining to approximately 57 million user records with 600,000 driver's license numbers.

We Can Regulate Social Media Without Censorship. Here's How.

Time reported:

> Is it wise to try to regulate social media platforms? Can it even be done? These questions are vexing lawmakers in almost every democracy. And finally — after years of debate — some answers are coming into view.
>
> The basic case for legislative intervention is, in fact, non-partisan. It's simply that, as more and more of our discourse migrates online, social media platforms are increasingly trusted to draw the borders of free expression. They order, filter and present the world's information. They set rules about what may be said and who may say it. They approve, and ban, speakers and ideas. And when they do these things, they necessarily apply their own rules, principles, biases, and philosophies.
>
> That's not a criticism — sometimes the right will be aggrieved, sometimes the left — but it does mean that the choice is not between regulating speech and leaving it alone. Speech is already being regulated by platforms.
>
> And they have potent powers of enforcement: to stifle a voice or an idea with a single click, to make an idea disappear or to go viral. The case for regulation does not depend on the (plausible) assumption that particular platforms are actually biased one way or another. The issue is rather that they increasingly have the power to influence democratic discourse without appropriate checks and balances.

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Dozens of States Are Jumping on the Social Media Censorship Bandwagon

Gizmodo reported:

> 2022 may be remembered as a turning point for social media regulation, or maybe more aptly, failed social media regulation. Though Texas and Florida managed to dominate headlines recently for their constitutionally questionable deplatforming laws, they're far from the only states trying to get creative with managing content on social media platforms.
>
> A recent Politico analysis found 34 states, many conservative-leaning but not all, have proposed bills or passed laws vying to influence the way social media companies handle their users' content.
>
> In conservative-led states, the dominating trend here follows the Texas and Florida mold. States ranging from Ohio to Mississippi are trying to write laws that would prohibit companies from removing or moderating users' content based on their political viewpoint.
>
> On the other hand, legislators in Democratically led states like New York and California are attempting to forward legislation that would encourage social media companies to take a heavier-handed approach to moderating certain types of content deemed harmful.

Twitter Posts $270 Million Loss In First Earnings Report Since Elon Musk 'Terminated' $44 Billion Takeover Deal

Forbes reported:

> Social media giant Twitter posted a worse-than-expected loss Friday morning in its first earnings report since billionaire Elon Musk lucked out on a deal to buy the company, fueled in part by the massive uncertainty around the firm's fate as it embarks on a potentially lengthy legal battle with the world's richest person.
>
> San Francisco-based Twitter reported revenue of $1.2 billion in the second quarter, falling short of average analyst estimates calling for $1.3 billion and slipping 1% from the same period last year.
>
> The company also reported a worse-than-expected loss of $270 million, or 35 cents per share — compared to expectations for a loss of 7 cents per share and a profit of $66 million in the second quarter last year.

Some Schools Are Restricting Google Chrome Usage Over Security Concerns

TechRadar reported:

> Several schools and other educational organizations are having to restrict usage of Google's software, including its Chrome browser and Chrome OS offerings over security and privacy fears.
>
> The Dutch Ministry of Education has ordered the country's education industry to implement the changes following fears that Google's software is in conflict with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other privacy-related regulations in the country.
>
> According to reports, these changes include a number of things, such as implementing specific Group Policies, and disabling services such as automatic website translation, or spell checks.

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